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ABSTRACT

This document presents Montana's plan for the education of homeless children and youth, in accordance with requirements of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. The plan includes four main parts. Part I, "Program Policy," summarizes the intent of the McKinney Act to ensure free, appropriate educational services for all children and commits the Office of Public Instruction to advocacy for homeless children and youth in Montana. Part II, "Goals," lists the following objectives of the state plan: (1) increased public awareness of educational problems; (2) initiation of a comprehensive plan to deal with recognized problems; (3) coordination of all state and local services; and (4) assuring full access to education for all homeless children and youth. Part III, "Definitions," defines the terms "child" and "youth," "homeless," and "free, appropriate public education." Part IV, "State Plan Issues," describes initiatives and results relating to the following McKinney Act requirements: (1) creation of an Office of Coordinator; (2) data gathering, including a statewide survey and needs assessment; (3) determination of problems and needs on the basis of survey and needs assessment results; (4) legal requirements pertaining to school law; (5) provision of procedures for resolving disputes regarding student placement; and (6) an interagency organization. Comments by official respondents at public hearings are appended. (AF)

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ED334298

MONTANA STATE PLAN

for

EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987
(P.L. 100-77)

April 1, 1989

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INTRODUCTION

Homelessness in Montana is recognized by some as a social, economic and moral problem. Regardless of underlying reasons, the existence of the problem necessitates that we take action to help solve it.

Homelessness often deprives people of the basic necessities of life: adequate food, clothing, and shelter. It deprives children of an additional need: education. According to Office of Public Instruction's 1988 homeless survey, Montana has 234 homeless children and youth who do not attend school.[1] Some of those who do attend do so on an interrupted basis. They are affected by many of the same problems that face those not attending school.

There is much disagreement at the national level (and in Montana) about the numbers of homeless. There is, however, consensus between the Government and advocates that the problem is growing. "There is no disagreement about two shocking facts: the number of Americans with no home is growing at an alarming rate, and families with young children are now joining the homeless in increasing numbers."[2] Montana is not immune to this growth.

The following plan is based on the degree of knowledge and information that we have at the current time. All areas of concern are not specifically addressed in this plan, such as homeless children and youth who have mental health problems, the hidden homeless and others. These topics may be addressed in the future as we attempt to bring all of the state's resources together to achieve a comprehensive solution to our state's homeless problems.

[1]Office of Public Instruction, Montana State Survey: Homeless Children and Youth (survey results), October 1988.

[2]Congressional Record - Senate, response from Senator E. Kennedy, Education Committee Chairman, S8943, June 27, 1987.

I. PROGRAM POLICY

A. Title VII, Subtitle B of the Stewart B. McKinney Act, directs the Office of Public Instruction to establish a program with the following idea in mind: "The purpose of this subtitle is to make plain the intent and policy of Congress that every child of a homeless family and each homeless youth be provided the same opportunities to receive free, appropriate educational services as children who are residents of the state. No child or youth should be denied access to any educational services simply because he or she is homeless."[3]

B. The Office of Public Instruction plans to be an active and a reactive advocate for the education of homeless children and youth in Montana. The at-risk nature of homeless children is recognized and the Office of Public Instruction will attempt to implement a comprehensive plan to work toward solving those educational problems. All homeless children and youth must be considered at-risk. Too often in Montana, we tend to see homelessness as a big city problem and do not want to recognize its existence in Montana towns and cities. For this reason, this plan takes an active role in providing help for these children and youth. It begins by creating increased general public awareness of homelessness and those specific barriers to the education of homeless children and youth. Currently, at-risk programs, dropout prevention, and remedial programs for the disadvantaged are provided. The plan will foster a more coordinated effort among all state programs in meeting the educational needs of the homeless.

II. GOALS

A. The plan's goals are directed toward increased public awareness that leads to active participation at all public and private levels. The goals will address a population that includes students living on their own, families with children, drug and alcohol effected, runaway youth, socially transient and short-term foster care children and youth.

B. The specific goals of the state plan are outlined in 1-4.

1. Increased public awareness of educational problems.

2. Office of Public Instruction initiating a comprehensive plan to deal with recognized problems.

3. Coordination of all state and local services.

4. The ultimate goal of assuring access to a free, appropriate public education for education of homeless children and youth.

[3]Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, joint explanatory statement of the Committee of Conference, Page 63, July 1987.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. child and youth -

For purposes of this section, "child" and "youth" includes those persons who, were they children of residents of the state, would be entitled to a free public education.

B. homeless -

A homeless individual is one who: (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence or (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. (Section 103(a)(1)(2) of the Act.)

The term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwised detained by an Act of Congress or a state law [Section 103(c)].

C. free, appropriate public education -

A free, appropriate public education means the educational programs and services that are provided the children of a resident of a state, and that are consistent with state school attendance laws [Section 721(1)]. It includes educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged, educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education, and programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs [Section 722(e)(5)].

IV. STATE PLAN ISSUES [Section 22(e)]

"The state plan for Montana is adopted in response to the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B (Education of Homeless Children and Youth) and is intended to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within Montana with regard to the following provisions:"[4]

A. OFFICE OF COORDINATOR

Section 722(c)(2), "Establish or designate an office of coordinator of education of homeless children and youth in accordance with subsection (D)."

1. The Office of Public Instruction on April 4, 1988, established a position within the office that is designated as Coordinator/Specialist for Education of Homeless Children and Youth. This position was filled in August of 1988. The Office of Public Instruction is responsible for all of the mandates of the Stewart B. McKinney Act and directs the coordinator/specialist to serve as the Office of Public Instruction's advocate for homeless children and youth.

2. This position will be funded through grants available from the Stewart B. McKinney Act.

[4]Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act ("Act") Title VII, Subtitle B. Sections 721 and 722, Pages 46 through 49, July 1987.

B. DATA GATHERING

Section 722(dX1), "Annually gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the state and such data gathering shall include the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and homeless youth in elementary and secondary schools and the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children."

The information contained in the following sections (1 and 2) are the basis for fulfilling the requirements for a state plan.

1. Statewide Survey - Education of homeless children and youth

   a. The primary requirement under this section is to develop a system for providing an unduplicated and accurate count in each state. The Office of Public Instruction will develop a system of identifying homeless children and youth within the program that allows for identification, that allows for arriving at an unduplicated count and that is verifiable with regard to accuracy.

      (1) This system uses an identifier for each student. The identifier consists of a person's first, middle, and last initial and a six-digit birthdate.

      (2) The gathered information is input to a data base and screened for duplication. This is to be done to provide a count that is unduplicated for each county.

      (3) The coordinator/specialist will maintain an information log for follow up with the individuals who completed the survey. This will allow verification of the survey count.

   b. This plan includes the ongoing process of counting homeless children and youth annually and verification of previously gathered data.

      (1) The coordinator/specialist will schedule accuracy verification meetings with survey respondents in those areas of high concentration of homeless children and youth. This will be done annually.

      (2) The coordinator/specialist shall take steps to assure that Local Education Agencies, advocacy groups, shelter providers and any other social service providers are included in the annual survey process of homeless children and youth. The coordinator/specialist will develop a file listing these groups and organizations for use in future programs and sharing of information regarding education of homeless children and youth.

   c. These activities will be funded by a grant from the Stewart B. McKinney Act.

2. Needs Assessment - Nature and Extent of Problems

a. The coordinator/specialist will develop an information base which includes all of the responses regarding the needs of homeless children and youth.

b. The needs assessment will be part of the annual survey process of homeless children and youth. The coordinator/specialist shall gather and analyze information regarding the initial survey (October 1988). The coordinator/specialist will compare responses to ascertain the effectiveness of the homeless program.

c. The Office of Public Instruction and the coordinator/specialist will conduct items 1 and 2 on an annual basis and make available to the public any information and data that is relevant to solving recognized problems.

d. These activities will be funded by a grant from the Stewart B. McKinney Act.

3. Final Report

a. The coordinator/specialist will complete and submit an annual report to the Department of Education in Washington, D.C. The format of this report will be the same as the final report to the Department of Education and will be in compliance with Section 722(dX1) of the Act. This report is due in Washington, D.C., no later than December 31st of each year.

b. The Office of Public Instruction will publicize and make the report available to any agencies, departments, offices or individuals upon request.

c. Annual funding will be provided by a grant from the Stewart B. McKinney Act.

C. PROBLEMS AND NEEDS - Survey and Needs Assessment Results

1. Survey Data

a. The Office of Public Instruction has completed its first annual report to the Department of Education. The number of homeless children and youth reported in Montana was based on information aggregated over a year's time (November 1987 to November 1988). The Office of Public Instruction believes this information gives a realistic picture of the number of individual homeless children and youth to be served during a typical school year. The Office of Public Instruction's survey identified almost 1700 homeless children and youth in the responding counties and projected a total of approximately 2600 children and youth statewide. The Office of Public Instruction will continue to use the six specific categories of homeless as its criteria for homelessness.

b. Recommendation:

The Office of Public Instruction recommends that Congress and the Department of Education continue counting short-term foster

care as part of the homeless definition. Short-term foster children usually do not have a fixed regular or adequate residence. They are placed by state law but are not detained by state law. Most importantly, they also suffer from interrupted and hindered learning, due to lack of a permanent home. Survey respondents in Montana identified a need to increase services to this category of homeless children and youth.

c. The Office of Public Instruction plans to use the demographic results of its survey to conduct area follow up and verify the numbers of homeless children and youth. There were 36 out of 56 counties that reported at least one homeless child. While the Stewart B. McKinney program is intended to help all homeless children and youth throughout Montana, the initial direction of the program will be to verify counts and needs in those counties that responded to the Office of Public Instruction's survey. Secondary efforts will be made to compile numbers in those demographic areas that did not respond (an estimated 991 homeless children and youth).

d. In areas where no information was gathered, the Office of Public Instruction will attempt to verify the zero count.

e. The following is a breakdown of demographic areas in Montana. The number of homeless children and youth is listed in parenthesis. The first county listed is the county of highest concentration of homeless children and youth in an area.

f. Demographic Areas

Area 1	Flathead, Lincoln, Lake Counties (86)
Area 2	Missoula, Ravalli, Mineral, Sanders Counties (314)
Area 3	Silver Bow, Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Granite Counties (55)
Area 4	Lewis & Clark, Powell, Jefferson, Broadwater, Meagher Counties (183)
Area 5	Gallatin, Madison, Park, Sweet Grass, Wheatland Counties (84)
Area 6	Cascade, Judith Basin, Fergus, Petroleum, Chouteau, Teton Counties (152)
Area 7	Hill, Liberty, Toole, Pondera, Glacier, Blaine Counties (149)
Area 8	Roosevelt, Sheridan, Daniels, Valley, Phillips Counties (89)
Area 9	Yellowstone, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Carbon, Big Horn Counties (372)
Area 10	Rosebud, Treasure, Garfield, Powder River, Custer, Carter, Fallon Counties (127)
Area 11	Richland, McCone, Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux Counties (42)

2. Solutions:

a. Increased public awareness of the definition of homeless children and youth and the data regarding the count in Montana is essen-

tial for any program to be effective in dealing with the homeless student problems or barriers. The public must become aware of the problems that homeless children and youth face in Montana.

b. The Office of Public Instruction and the coordinator/specialist will maintain an advocacy position with regard to public awareness and the recognition of the problems in Montana. The coordinator/specialist shall be available to any interested party or organization to provide information and to help organize efforts on behalf of homeless children and youth. The Office of Public Instruction will give support and direction with regard to educational programs for homeless children and youth and provide information to direct interested parties to the proper agency with regard to homelessness outside the realm of education.

c. The coordinator/specialist will make available all statistical data regarding the education of homeless children and youth for public use.

d. This portion of the state plan will be funded by a grant from the Stewart B. McKinney Act.

3. Needs Assessment Data
(In order of most numerous response.)

a. Educational Needs of Homeless Children and Youth

(1) Need an Advocate For Homeless Within The School System.

(a) It is the intention of the Office of Public Instruction, through the efforts of the coordinator/specialist and other staff, to be that advocate. The coordinator/specialist will also work to establish local advocates in school districts that are or could be effected by the enrollment of a homeless child or youth.

(b) No specific funding is necessary. The ongoing state program will fulfill the need for funding.

(2) Teachers Need To Be More Aware and Concerned About The Situations Facing Homeless Children and Youth.

(a) It will be part of the coordinator/specialist's duty to increase awareness and attempt to increase support for homeless children and youth in Montana. This will be done through a concentrated awareness program at the school district level and among private service providers.

(b) The coordinator/specialist will direct efforts toward those areas of high concentrations of homeless children and youth. This will be accomplished through school and area visitations and seminars to help increase the awareness of the homeless problems.

(c) The ongoing state program will fulfill need for funding.

(3) Tutoring Available Outside the School System

(a) Recommendation - The Office of Public Instruction is recommending that this be addressed by Congress in any future program through the Stewart B. McKinney Act or other programs regarding homelessness in the United States. All activities are contingent upon federal funding.

(b) The Office of Public Instruction will be responsible for ensuring that existing district tutoring programs are available to all students, homeless or otherwise.

(4) Safe and Adequate Housing or Shelter

(a) This is the responsibility of other state and local agencies within the Stewart B. McKinney Act.

(b) It shall be the responsibility of the coordinator/specialist to make available appropriate information regarding homeless children and youth to the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Family Services, the Human Resouces Development Council and other public and private groups that provide housing or shelter in Montana.

(5) Day Care for Siblings of Homeless Children and Youth

(a) This is the responsibility of other state agencies.

(b) Montana currently has several state agencies that fund day care. The coordinator/specialist will be responsible for maintenance of a list of names and telephone numbers of contact persons at each of these agencies.

(6) Transportation to Schools

(a) Current Montana School Law [20-10-101(2)(c)] requires a school district to provide transportation to schools for any student residing three or more miles from an elementary or high school in that district.
(Check 20-10-105 Residency/Tuition/Transportation)

(b) It is also recommended that Congress consider funding for special transportation issues in future programs.

(7) Alternative Education Sites for Homeless

(a) Thirty-nine of the respondents to the survey made comments and suggestions in regard to providing an alternate education site for homeless children and youth. Within an area of an established shelter or services, this idea tends to coincide with the general at-risk,

dropout and homeless programs currently in effect. The alternative site provides many of the necessary needs that, due to the nature of homeless children and youth, cannot be realized in the regular school system.

(b) The coordinator/specialist will pursue a study of the feasibility of a joint school district, shelter, service provider facility for education of homeless children and youth.

(c) It is also recommended that Congress consider this as a major part of funding of future homeless programs.

(8) Counseling and Intervention

(a) As with all at-risk groups, it is important to reach children at a young age. The Office of Public Instruction believes that its goal of increased awareness and concern at all levels, especially the school level, will help solve some of the problems of homeless. The expertise, counseling and intervention by school districts will be a benefit in solving some problems of homeless in Montana.

(b) Special considerations are necessary with regard to counseling of homeless families, homeless children with single parents and homeless youth. Current funding levels and availablility of time for school district counselors is a hinderance to the services needed by all students. Therefore, it is recommended that the Department of Education and Congress consider the area of counseling a major consideration for service and funding for that service.

(9) Training in Jobs for Parents and Youth

(a) There is a definite need for jobs and job training for homeless parents and children and youth. This area is provided for in Title VII, subtitle C of the Stewart B. McKinney Act, Job Training for the Homeless. It will be part of the responsibility of the coordinator/specialist to have information available regarding proper agency contacts for this program.

(b) The coordinator/specialist will, upon request, provide information regarding current district programs available through Adult Education, Vocational Education and the Job Training Partnership Act.

(10) School Records Available (old and new)

(a) School districts will make every attempt to secure past school records from the prior school attended by a homeless child and youth. The district will also make available the current records of students leaving that

district. The Office of Public Instruction will assist in securing the prior records of any incoming student to Montana.

(b) Recommendation: The Congress should fund a position with operating expenses, including a computer at each SEA for the purpose of tracking homeless children and youth. This position may be part of the homeless coordinator's responsibility. This would establish a U.S. network for tracking and follow up. This program could work in conjunction with crime agencies and missing children programs or the current Migrant system.

4. Other Problems

a. Malnutrition/Health/Clothing

(1) The coordinator/specialist will make information available regarding all Stewart B. McKinney programs. This will include contact of all state, county and local health agencies and any agency or department that provides food, health products or clothing.

b. Tuition Payments/Attendance Rules and Laws/Districts Refusing to Register Students

(1) The Office of Public Instruction and the coordinator/specialist have taken steps to change the tuition and attendance law to eliminate any barrier that tuition payments may cause homeless children and youth. Legislation is currently being considered by the legislature.

(2) The Office of Public Instruction policy is to allow any homeless children and youth to attend school pending a dispute being resolved through proper procedures.

c. Problems in Identifying Homeless Children and Youth

(1) Lack specific knowledge about individuals

Increased public awareness of the Office of Public Instruction's program will make the public respond more positively toward homelessness in general. Recognizing the problems and needs will open new channels of communication necessary to coordinate state and local agencies.

(2) Definition is not specific

The Federal Government and Congress need to make a more specific definition available regarding examples of people who do, or do not, fit the homeless definition. Specific guidelines relating to the terms "fixed," "regular," and "adequate" are essential.

(3) Lack of parent cooperation

Increased awareness of problems of the homeless will help in this area. If parents know someone is trying to help, they may respond more positively for the sake of the child.

(4) Too time consuming to retrieve information

Awareness of the problem of homelessness by school and service providers may show them the importance of the program, the value of gathering information and the services needed by homeless children and youth.

D. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (SCHOOL LAW)

1. Areas of Consideration

a. Residency [Section 721(2)]

Montana School Law regarding residency does NOT prohibit access to a free education.

b. Attendance and Tuition and Residency [Section 721(1)]

(1) The Office of Public Instruction has taken steps to get the legislature to amend current school law to allow homeless children and youth access to a free, appropriate education.

(2) The Office of Public Instruction has submitted legislation, Senate Bill 281 entitled, "An Act to require admittance of homeless children to public schools as required by P.L. 100-77, by amending section 20-5-101, MCA."

c. The Office of Public Instruction will comply with all requirements of the Act and, specifically, section 722(e)(1-6).

(1) The local education agency of each homeless child or youth shall either:

(a) Continue the child's or youth's education in the school district of origin for the remainder of the school year; or

(b) Enroll the child or youth in the school district where the child or youth is actually living, whichever is in the child's or youth's best interest.

This is a requirement of the Stewart B. McKinney Act [Section 722(e)(3)]

(2) The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

This is a requirement of the Stewart B. McKinney Act [Section 722(eX4)]

(3) Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected according to the provisions of paragraph 3, including educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged, educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.

(4) The school records of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained

(a) so that records are available in a timely fashion when a child or youth enters a new school district; and

(b) in a manner consistent with Section 433 of the General Education Provisions Act.

(5) Each plan adopted under this subsection shall assure, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by state law, that local education agencies within the state will comply with the requirements of paragraphs 3-6 (of the Act).

E. PROVIDE PROCEDURES FOR THE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES REGARDING THE EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The coordinator/specialist will be available for discussing problems that arise regarding homeless children and youth. The official procedures for the resolution of disputes are in accordance with Administrative Rules of Montana, Chapter 6, Rules of Procedure for all School Controversy, Contested Cases Before the County Superintendents of the State of Montana.

F. INTERAGENCY ORGANIZATION

1. It is the intention of the Office of Public Instruction and the coordinator/specialist to initiate an awareness program that includes the formation of a state interagency task force for the homeless. The task force will be responsible for bringing together all state agencies, the Governor's Office, and other interested parties that have interest in, and knowledge of, homeless children and youth.

2. The purpose of the task force will be to exchange information and ideas and provide input to each other for providing the services to the homeless. The exchange of knowledge will lessen the barriers homeless children encounter by making agency information more readily available.

kb/310

The Office of Public Instruction submits the following, the Montana State Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

This plan is submitted to the Department of Education as a requirement of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77).

The State of Montana and the Office of Public Instruction retain the right to amend or make additions to this plan as an ongoing part of the Stewart B. McKinney Program. The Office of Public Instruction will re-evaluate this plan annually as new survey and needs assessment data become available. This right will allow our Montana program to be more responsive to the growing problem areas and areas that may yet be recognized.

Implementation of this state plan will commence with the following signatures and the acceptance of completion by the Department of Education.

4-26-89
Date

Nancy Keenan
Nancy Keenan, Superintendent

4-26-89
Date

Terry L Fischer
Coordinator

The Addendum

The Office of Public Instruction and the State Coordinator conducted public hearings throughout Montana in regard to this state plan. There were 11 public meetings held in 11 different towns in Montana. Each area was covered with pre hearing media coverage by television, radio and newspaper, two to three weeks prior to the meetings. The coordinator sent draft copies of the state plan to all survey respondents in the state prior to the public hearing in their area.

Format of the meeting was to start at 7:00 p.m., offer 30 minutes of program explanation and ask for official public response at any time from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m., with discussion during and after the scheduled meeting time.

There were 73 people total who attended the 11 meetings. Few of these made any official statement but many entered into formal discussion. The following transcripts are the tape recorded or written comments by official respondents.

A. Leahner

This man is without doubt one of the best ? I have ever run into. He is good at what he does. Social Security Board told Ken that he couldn't earn but so much. The school system told him they couldn't pay him any less than so much and the two overlapped. So to keep from losing social security he came to the school board and said "I'll tell you what I'll do, from my social security income I'll teach," and they said "No we can't hire you because we have to pay you and you can't get below the sum. So the man with all his skills is now tending a bar. No the man is this good, I've got an old Dodge pick-up out there that I screwed up really well and he told me over the phone what was wrong with that pick-up and we hit it a couple of times with a hammer and he fixed it. Now he is a very good mechanic, the bureaucracy of both institutions is so bad that here is a man with extreme experience that he could pass on hands-on, now maybe everybody doesn't want to be a mechanic. I don't want to be a mechanic because I don't like working on trucks or anything else mechanical, but it sure is nice to be able to know what I am doing and I think that the apraised system is the very best, no penalties if you own another unit, a system of social security or whatever, get these people off of welfare and out of the homeless condition. Give them something they can do that is really profitable, not only to themselves, because it won't put money in their pocket, it will give them the feeling that there is some self worth there. It will help to save Montana because the Governor is going to get a little money because of taxes and that ought to make him happy... The penalizing between the units is not good and will not totally resolve anything unless we find a way to train the people that have no training and there are...school of her being a teacher knows that. My son having come home from school and into the workforce and was trained in an apprenticeship type field and like I said has learned to do motors and all this stuff. I can't do that because I didn't receive that type of technical training. I have a college diploma and it doesn't do me a lick-of-a-bit of good because I can't use it and I have come here with a degree and look like I'm a... Somebody needs to do something to help these people become useful to the society, not leeches. If we have a bunch of leeches before long all parasites kill the host. It is a fact of biology. If we don't do something besides just sucking the mush, the children, the children of so less. I love children, I've got four of my own, but I don't need them being leeches on society and I don't think anybody else needs that. We need some system where if you're going to cycle the money off from the kid and he's going to help, then you get him into a program, find a field they like. If they are not Einstein, well get them into something that they can do. I mean auto workers make a fortune. More money than I make. We need a program where they're going to have an incentive and they are going to appreciate themselves, appreciate where they

live, appreciate their country, appreciate their state and we live in Montana, that's what we've got to start appreciating right here. I do believe apprenticeship is what we need. There is no sense just giving them money, it's going to kill them and it's going to kill our society.

The only thing about this institutionalization that goes on I worked for a mental hospital in Washington and we had what they called a swinging door syndrome and you had people that in the Spring as soon as it got warm, sunny and the flowers came out they left the hospital. Now there was not really anything wrong with these people, but you come to Fall and the first snowfall and they would stand nude in the middle of Spokane and straight out to Eastern they'd be. There was a swinging door syndrome and yes they are a... group. They have a little place in Spokane in which I won't mention that they call a place for those folks. Now they live in that community, and if it gets rugged then they go down and stand nude or be plum... or whatever is handy to get back to the hospital. It is a group, it becomes a click, and they are not brought out of that click you go to people in Washington on the East side and you say alright we want to set up halfway houses and they say, "not in my neighborhood you won't, they're crazy." Well what about these poor people. "Well they're all thieves and bandits, they're gypsies look at them wandering around here like nudes." This is stupid, you create that kind of a syndrome and you are going to end up with the homeless, the insane, the criminal, the sexual psychopaths, and everybody is going to be in little block houses and it's not going to help. We've got to get them so that they are all contributing.

Let me ask you also, something that's gathering in my mind and probably either contributes to the homelessness...but I think that somewhere along the line, probably it does, because if you have people that are more concerned about making a buck than housing people and you have people that are more concerned about making a buck than feeding the people. I was over at the laundrymat the other night and watched a program about Lassie and anyway it boiled down to this dog needing surgery and the vet said "well being this is a good cause we will just contribute this stuff." It was a kind hearted effort. In teaching people in any profession or to teach them any values you have to have a point to which to arrive the ... to me they are trying to establish in congress said something about the fact that we have no values and so could it be that the drug problem and the AIDS problem and the alcohol problem has something to do with the fact that who gives a rip. Where am I going, I didn't come from anywhere and nobody really cares and maybe that's a lot of the question that needs to be answered. I mean you can go out and fight a dragon but you don't even put your chin to the head of the table. I think that's where alot of our problem is we don't want to reach the head of the table and we're just not going to wave any sword in the air. Being

cornered by the dragon and the problem is that there is not talk to young people that come out of the schools and they don't care. Well if I can make out it's fine with me I'll make it however I can make it, if it's pushing drugs or sex or whatever I don't care I don't note the results. I have had a man tell me in school that our society is so suicidal it sees the danger and flies in the face of it anyway. Look at all the tobaco commercials, don't smoke, it's bad for your health. Well who cares. There's no standard in which we can really place our judgments and you know people know that. I mean they aren't stupid and they are aware that there is no place to go unless you win and earn a living for what reason and I think that probably a lot of our problem is the... situation and there you have a whole bunch of people who don't really care and they go and raise the rents. If you subsidize it you're going to raise rents and you still have all those people, they've got people in New York now that they gave $1,000 a year and they've got no place to live. They are called the job or employed homeless. There is no place to live but they're employed. They've got a job unit but no place to live... Because some clown doesn't have the loyalty to help these people and they don't care any more because we have lost all direction and I think before we can bother to approach drugs or AIDS or anything else we've got to ask ourselves what are we trying to... what are we trying to... what are we trying to teach them in the public schools, what is the point because these kids are going to ask the question why? What are we here for? They don't care they just don't care. I don't know how people say that the Bible is old hat, but I have got news for you, the Bible says he that reigns the earth is going to be a cannibal. Now it doesn't make any difference whether you believe in God or not. There is a God and he is going to pay us dearly for this garbage we're doing and running around here and polluting the waters or polluting our kids heads. There has got to be an answer and we have got to do something to give direction to our country again and if it stops here and now it's going to all end and that's where we have got to be. But we can't answer this issues... some people they've got to go for it. A value a level somewhere they've got to go for it.

Tina Morrisen

You talk about educating the teachers and administrators and all of these people, I think that it would be a real shame if it was limited to that. I think there needs to be a program where the kids are allowed that education and that knowledge so that they can make some good judgments. I think that they need to get to a point were they can think for themselves, where they can do some problem solving stuff. Instead of the teacher figuring out themselves, what this kid needs to know. I think they need to be allowed to have that opportunity.

kb/1

John Berry

That one is a big deal as far as I'm concerned, inadequate home and you can start picking those out even in the wealthy and well educated have inadequate homes. There is no satisfaction in ... in equal ability to obtain degrees and money and think they've gotten where they wanted to go, there comes a point in their life where they realize that the cannot find autopia that they are searching for. The kids go astray, I have seen it in my own... So it hasn't ... come to... with this because there is not good viable working idea. I think we have to back up and look at our nation as it is we're looked upon as many of countries. Many of the countries look at us as being a little sick on our flagrant use of profanity and sex and you just turn the TV on and it's there. The kids are into it and I think our whole life structure in the United States is really ungratis in some respects. To go back and step back it to history, in time... and recorrect that tone is impossible we would have to come to grips to where we are and recognize some of those problems that we have. Are they good healthy things that we are passing on to our children? Is it part of the signs of the times of progress or so to speek. I just ... and if you start picking out what is a good home, what is a bad home, who is a good parent, who's a bad parent? There is definitely no... and say yes this one here falls in the category to be on the borderline, this one's past borderline or this one's okay, but I think that happens that many, many ... that go to school have more money, more wealth or have to escape scrutiny of the cover.

kb/l

Chettina Hackett

I think this goes beyond the Office of Public Instruction in what they are attempting to do. There needs to be more involvement from people outside of OPI. Mainly the Department of Family Services. What I would like to see in your information gathering and your needs assessment is that you involve the social workers from the department of family services. In that the children that I see, they're involved with them and they would have a lot of input as to what they are seeing that isn't getting met educationally for the children and also maybe things that maybe could be done for the children, because many times it's the social workers that are involved with shuffling these kids around and I'm not saying that that is bad, but it's sometimes a necessary thing and I think that they could be a big asset.

The other thing I see is frequent problems with the children in that they are consistently being shuffled from school to school and county to county. For instance in my home, sometimes the child, I'm a temporary facility, they're there a maximum of 45 days and yet sometimes just in that short time it becomes necessary to transfer a child just across town to another school. Now that is a large burden for that child. They have to readjust to a whole new set of peers. They have to readjust to a new teacher, and many times the teachers don't have the time and they don't have all the people that they need to be involved to assess what they can be doing in short time to see that that child's educational needs are being met. I guess a frequent problem that involves us is that there needs to be a tracking mechanism, something that is going on to make sure that when these children are being shuffled around that someone, maybe you, a coordinator or someone, is seeing that their needs are continuing to be met. That someone is watching out for them. They need an advocate, these kids can't speak for themselves. They're not going to, they're not going to say, "Hey, I can't speak English very well. Would you give me some assistance?" They're just going to move along through the system and they're going to be really hurt by it. I see lots of kids that come to our home that are in High School that move from county to county, been in and out of foster homes and have been shuffled around, those are the kids that I see that are really lacking in their writing skills and their speaking skills. They're almost illiterate and some are illiterate. I know that it is not the fault of the teachers if they are moved around like that, but someone needs to be there to keep some coordination going. I guess what I'd like to see is maybe a meeting or a staffing whenever a student begins a school and this is something that I've done in another state before or been involved in where everyone that is involved with that child attends that staffing. Maybe there could be a timeline where that has to occur when a new child arrives at a school, maybe 30 days,

60 days maximum. I think 30 days that everyone should get together. The records should all be sent to that school and if not they should be obtaining those records from where ever they've been and they should get together and the people that need to be involved is not just the school. It needs to be the social workers. It needs to be maybe guidance counselors from down town or from where ever and it also needs to be the teachers involved with them and sometimes maybe even a probation officer that's the person involved with them. So they can all sit down together, because they're the ones that all know that child and determine what's best. Many times I see a child that should be in a resource room that isn't. They're still in the mainstream and they're not learning anything because they're just too far behind the others by now. I would just like to see a lot of that done. You're on the right track in that, I see throughout your paper the word appropriate, and I guess I really want that word looked at because I really am not always sure that these kids that are considered homeless under the broad definition are getting the appropriate education that they need.

You can't just do it from within the schools. You've got to get some agencies outside the school involved whether the Department of Family Services would be a very good one and I wish there was more coordination going on. They're so concerned about the emotional aspects of trying to get that child in a stable home environment that their educational needs aren't being met on their end and it is not always a concern of theirs. But if there was more coordination between the two then somebody would look out for that child's educational needs, I hope.

kb/1

Katherine Glenn

I have another thought that came to mind, I have never connected the two of them together but, homeless people if they are single or family however it can be arranged, that citizens of the United States adopt them just like we have foster care and all these poor Africans and poor people all around the world. Why can't we have foster parents just to our own, in this country and I think as an incentive for someone doing that and they would be their ... or almost like a parent type of thing. They'd get a full tax deduction for taking this child under their wing and that would relieve Uncle Sam the burden of those monies that might not go to that person. That's my feeling.

kb/1

March 7,1989

Terry Teichrow
Homeless Program Coordinator
OPI
Helena, MT

Terry,

Here are some of my concerns regarding the provision of educational services for homeless children.
Tuition is a problem. Current state law requires that non-resident elementary students pay tuition if the trustees have not waived tuition for all students, high school can be waived on a student by student basis. Unless homeless children are living with their legal guardians tuition must be charged. The solution is to either do away with tuition all together or provide tuition from a grant or fund established to pay districts tuition for homeless children.

Structuring a program for the homeless presents interesting challanges. Because the homeless population fluctuates almost on a daily basis funding should be designed so that the ups and downs do not affect the revenue source. One day a program in a school may have 10 children, the next 5. No matter what, the services must be available. Placing students into regular classrooms is preferable to using separate or pull out programs. The problem is that most of these children will be well below the attained level of children in the same age group. This may not be unmanageable if the classload of the teacher is small enough or there is significant help in instruction and diagnosis to afford the teacher time to address individual needs. With students moving in and out of classes fairly frequently finding out where a student is and should be will be a time consuming and arduous task. Any funding program must recognize and address these real problems. It seems that there are two means of addressing the problems. One is to provide a separate classroom that deals with homeless children, much like a pre- school program that permits the diagnosis of students before they are placed into the regular program, and then some special assistance that moves with the child to the regular program. The second way is to establish a separate school within a school that deals with only homeless students, integrating them into the regular program when possible, but essentially maintaining a separate staff for homeless students. I am sure there are other means as well. How funds are allocated to districts seems best based upon an estimated student count for those districts that have completed a needs survey and will implement a specific program. Demonstration of inter-agency cooperation is essential.
Program coordination from the state level must be done through the superintendent of each school district. Program entry into individual buildings must be through the superintendents office.

Initial and subsequent planning should be done with school districts. School districts such as Billings already have established procedures and inter-agency cooperation in place and have plans to further address solutions. It may be beneficial to the state and students if larger districts use the direct grant option for the federal homeless dollars, rather than an indirect state grant or allocation.
What ever the means of addressing the needs of the homeless are it is imperative that the state involve the districts in the initial planning for the state plan, mainly because some of the larger districts have already begun to address the remedy and have experience under their belts.

Terry, hope this is useful.

Gary